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CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HERCULES ROAD, WESTMINSTER BRIDGE ROAD, LONDON, S.E.1

Your reference

2nd October, 1968

Our reference

Dear Miss Mortimer,

Confirming our conversation this afternoon, I enclose a copy of a news story on the £5000 Fiction Prize which we have sent out under embargo to a number of overseas posts.

The story has been sent to the following areas: Athens/Nicosia; Malta; Southern Africa; West Africa; The Caribbean; India, Pakistan/Ceylon, Malaysia/Singapore and Australia/New Zealand.

I look forward to meeting you at your press conference tomorrow.

Yours sincerely,

Alec Forrest
Alec Forrest

ITEM 5. NEW FIVETHOUSAND POUNDS STERLING FICTION PRIZE

(EMBARGO: NOT FOR PUBLICATION BEFORE ZEROONEZEROZERO HRS FRIDAY FOUR OCTOBER)

A NEW FIVE THOUSAND POUND STERLING ANNUAL LITERARY PRIZE FOR A WORK OF FICTION - OPEN TO ANY COMMONWEALTH OR SOUTH AFRICAN WRITER - WAS ANNOUNCED IN LONDON TODAY FRIDAY (SEE EMBARGO) BY THE FIRM OF BOOKER MCCONNELL JOINTLY WITH THE PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION.

THIS AWARD, TO BE KNOWN AS THE BOOKER PRIZE, WILL BE GIVEN TO THE BEST NOVEL, IN THE OPINION OF THE JUDGES, TO HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN BRITAIN BETWEEN FIRST DECEMBER AND THE FOLLOWING THIRTIETH NOVEMBER. THE FIRST AWARD WILL BE MADE IN APRIL NINETEEN SIXTY-NINE.

PUBLISHERS MAY SUBMIT NOT MORE THAN TWO BOOKS FROM THEIR LISTS. FOR THE FIRST YEAR, THE PANEL OF JUDGES WILL BE CHAIRED BY THE LITERARY EDITOR OF 'THE GUARDIAN' NEWSPAPER, W.L. WEBB. THE OTHER MEMBERS ARE DAME REBECCA WEST, STEPHEN SPENDER, FRANK KERMODE AND DAVID FARRER.

THIS AWARD IS CLAIMED AS THE FIRST EXAMPLE OF MAJOR INDUSTRIAL SPONSORSHIP OF LITERATURE IN BRITAIN, WHERE THERE ARE ALREADY ABOUT FIFTY LITERARY PRIZES AVAILABLE.

BOOKER MCCONNELL IS THE PARENT COMPANY OF THE BOOKER GROUP, WHICH COMPRISES A LARGE NUMBER OF BUSINESSES IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COMMONWEALTH. THIS COMPANY HAS FOR SOME TIME BEEN PLANNING A MAJOR LITERARY AWARD. THE PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION, REPRESENTING THE BRITISH PUBLISHING WORLD, WERE INDEPENDENTLY CONSIDERING A SIMILAR IDEA.

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